

In the north western India, the two well known scripts of ancient India, were viz. namely the Brahmi and the Kharoshthi were both fairly in use but it is only the indigenous Brahmi which survived and led to the development of the later Indian alphabets. The Kharoshthi script went out of use after the third century. In this section we shall discuss the development of the Brahmi alphabet from its ^{in this section} earliest known period till the evolution of the Sharada alphabet from this script in the 9th century.

- In The seventh edict has been comparatively engraved hurriedly and the letters show cursive forms.
- The following features deserve notice.
1. The curves at the left end of a show sometimes greater bend
 2. kh shows a dot at the bottom of a bent vertical
 3. dh has a spiral form
 4. The letter t shows only two strokes instead of usual three, the longer one sloping downwards to the left and the shorter to the right.
 5. In y the two side vertical curves are sometimes unusually elongated upwards.

The Pathyari Inscription

The Pathyari inscription consists of two lines cut into one stone. The letters are of considerable size, the last one being not less than $\frac{1}{2}$ high. The characters of the inscription correspond entirely to those of the Ashokan edicts and do not display any significant peculiarities except that the lower part of the letters are much smaller in size as compared to their long verticals.

The last phase of the Brahmi alphabet of the Maurya period is represented by an inscription discovered from Kankali Tilla in Mathura by George Bühler and assigned by him on palaeographic grounds to 2nd century B.C. The letters show forms which are later than those of the Ashokan inscriptions but decidedly earlier than those used in the records of the post Maurya period. The following developments are noteworthy.

1. The letters are more rounded in shape.
2. The verticals used in the letters ^{now} are smaller in size.
3. The curves of medial i and ī are elongated.
4. The small triangles in place of usual circles in m and v are noteworthy.

§. The Kalsi Rock-edicts

The Kalsi edicts are engraved on a rock situated at Kalsi a village in the Chakrata tehsil of the ~~Dehra Dun~~^{Gurkwal} district of Uttaranchal. The letters mostly show cursive forms. The following peculiarities deserve notice.

1. The left limb of initial a is sometimes represented by a small vertical or a curved line attached to the right hand vertical by means of a small horizontal bar, e.g., Ed. XII, l. 38, Ed. XII, l. 39.
2. k has a dagger like form but also shows sometimes a highly cursive form, e.g., Ed. XII, l. 39
3. The letter kh has a big round loop at the bottom e.g., Ed. XIV, l. 21
4. ch has sometimes a peculiar shape. It consists of two circles with a small vertical line standing on the point of contact and bearing a serif at the upper end, e.g., Ed. V. l. 14.
5. j, which is mostly cursive possesses a loop in the middle, e.g. Ed. XIV, l. 22.
6. Amongst the Ashokan inscriptions only in these edicts do we find the forms of s' and s, e.g., Ed. XII, l. 37 and Ed. XII. l. 31
7. No sign for r and n can be traced in this version. I t ^{is} ~~and~~ sometimes written with only two strokes instead of its usual three strokes.

Medial Vowels

The following peculiarities of medial vowels leading to later forms may be noticed:

1. Medial ā is occasionally represented by a stroke placed over the top of the letter, e.g., over the top of the letter Ed. XIV, l. 21
2. Medial e is sometimes marked by a slanting stroke placed over the

ORIGIN & EVOLUTION OF SHARADA ALPHABET.

The BRAHMI ALPHABET OF NORTH WESTERN INDIA

3rd century B.C. to 6th century A.D.

The Brahmi Alphabet of it having a period (3rd centy B.C. to 200 A.D.)

A. The MAURYAN ALPHABET

The earliest definitely datable records of ancient North western India Indian writing are the inscriptions of the Maurya emperor Ashoka engraved on rocks and pillars and found all over India. The alphabet of these inscriptions is Besides the inscriptions of Ashoka several other records belonging to the Maurya period have been discovered from different parts of India. The alphabet of these records has been written in an alphabet known as Brahmi alphabet. The upper limit of the use of this alphabet cannot be known with any certainty. The lower limit according to Birkner cannot be known with any certainty. The subject of our study was the Mauryan period and the Sharada alphabet used in the north western part of the country. The alphabet of the North western part of the country has been studied by the writers of the Mauryan period with of the sub-continent we shall and examine the developments of the alphabet used in the Mauryan records. of the Maurya period failing from the north western part of the country.

The Brahmi Alphabet of North western India

The Brahmi alphabet of the NW India of the Mauryan period is represented by:

1. The Kausambi Rock Edicts
2. The Delhi-Tetra pillar Edicts
3. The Mathura brick Inscription of Kanishka
4. The Pathyan (Dist. Kangra H.P.) rock inscription.

1. The inscriptions of Ashoka found in the extreme north western part of the sub-continent are written in the Kharosthi and Bactrian Greek alphabets distinct from the Brahmi.